

A GOVERNMENT THAT TALKS TO ITSELF

Challenge

The City of Mishawaka was striving to implement GIS on a citywide level. At the beginning, most department heads were doubtful or concerned that GIS was too difficult or expensive. Typical interaction between or within departments was limited to conversations or looking at paper diagrams and information. The challenge was to have all departments keeping their geographic information in the same digital formats.

Action

The GIS Director cultivated departmental GIS coordinators, who were then equipped with software, training, server space, hardware, and if necessary, consulting services. Consultants helped design extensive databases for the GIS, linking Electric, Water, and Storm/Sewer systems. Using the GIS, these three departments now have accurate GPS data and are able to seamlessly transfer it to each other, and the Engineering Department.

The Redevelopment, Planning, and Street Departments are now using GIS on a daily basis. The Fire Department is also working on specialized maps for Fire and EMS vehicles, and the Police Department has begun work on crime mapping and analysis.

Results

Any employee can go into the GIS and locate certain properties or areas. A map can be quickly printed out (or simply viewed) which includes high-resolution aerial photography and City data so that discussions with citizens are more informed. Other intelligent maps are used to communicate with the public in an intuitive, visual way. GIS-generated maps have been provided to the County Prosecutor, the City Clerk, and department heads, as well as other outside organizations.

Duplication of effort and outdated data methods are gradually being eliminated, making city government more efficient. The GIS has improved intra- and inter-departmental coordination, streamlined workflows, sped up access to information, and enabled more intuitive decision making.



Zoning, parcel and address maps simplify how the City of Mishawaka conveys information to the public and itself